

Ted Engelmann

A Photo Essay

I was born in Bloomington, Indiana, January 3rd, 1947. I spent time living in places such as Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where my father was stationed during the Korean conflict. I had a taste of the life of an army brat, and later a university brat, moving around and attending several schools before I finally graduated from Johnstown High School in upstate New York.

Both my parents were educators, and my father was a photographer and public relations officer, first for RCA in Bloomington, Indiana, then the State University of New York in Oneonta.

I spent a year in Viet Nam as an air force sergeant, from March 1968-March 1969. As a ground-to-air radio equipment repairman, I was sent to work with a forward air control team located at a forward observation location for the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, *The Big Red One*. Lai Khe was unique in that we had a Vietnamese village within our base camp perimeter, and Highway 13 came right through the base camp. In October 1968, I was given orders to join Advisory Team 55 in the Delta village of Rach Gia. In Viet Nam, I always had a half-frame 35mm Olympus Pen EES-2 camera with me in my side-pant pocket.

I returned to the U.S. to spend nine months active duty in the air force at Robins AFB, Georgia, and took an early out in December 1969 in order to attend a community college in upstate New York. In June 1977, after several years attending Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, I received my undergraduate degree in Earth Science and Biology with a teaching certificate from the University of Northern Colorado, in Greeley.

I took photographs of everyday life during my tour of duty. I have

images depicting the culture and people of Viet Nam. To help make the images of the war more fully meaningful, in the mid-1980s I started documenting the process of healing in the U.S. by photographing the public rituals of dedicating monuments and memorials, parades, walks, marches, and the like.

My first venture to document the effects of the Vietnam conflict outside the U.S. was in September 1987. I attended the first "Welcome Home" parade for the Australian soldiers in Sydney. Interestingly, the Aussie *diggers* arrived in Sydney wearing their sport coats, slacks and ties, but kept their medals in their pockets, lest the public jeer them, as was the case some years earlier. This time the public was in full support. The Mayor of Sydney even offered free public transportation to anyone wearing his or her service medals.

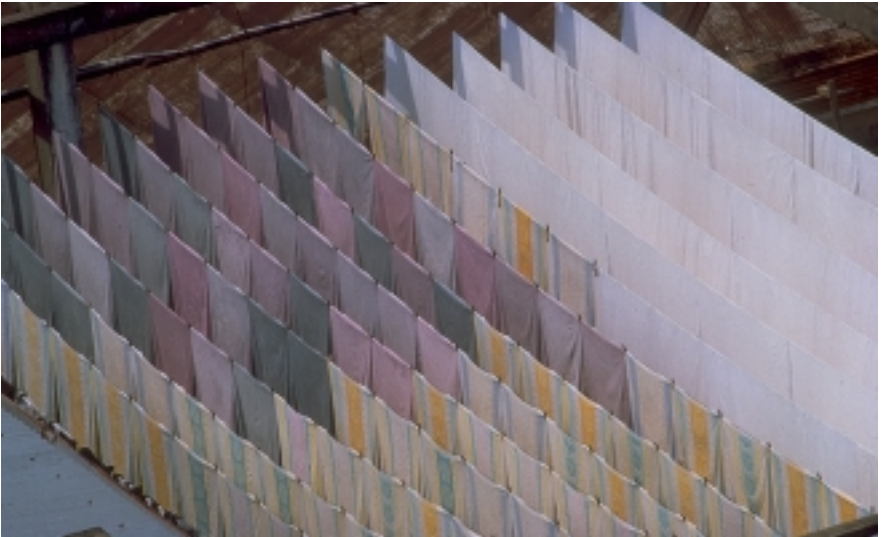
I returned to my base camp at Lai Khe, about 30 miles north of Bien Hoa, in early 1989. I have returned to Vietnam six times, living there for several months at a time.

Since there were more than 300,000 South Korean soldiers in Viet Nam, I wanted to research the Korean soldier's experience. I secured a position as visiting professor at Han Nam University in Taejon, South Korea from 1990-91. I have since visited Korea three times. I have images and insight depicting an Asian and a Western perspective, an American experience, and the changes in the land and culture where the conflict took place, from the early 1960s to 1975.

Over the years, I have created about 30,000 slides and several thousand black and white images covering four cultures.



The Vietnam Veterans National Memorial Chapel, Angel Fire, New Mexico, May 1986



Laundry drying at the Palace Hotel, Saigon, Viet Nam, March 1989



Statues along Highway 1, near Xuan Loc, Viet Nam, August 1999



Monsoon in Hue, Viet Nam, March 1989



The Holy See of the Cao Dai Temple, Tay Ninh, Viet Nam, July 1997



Polio Braces, Saigon, Viet Nam, March 1989



Amerasian Boys and their Mother, Saigon, Viet Nam, March 1989



Repatriation of American Remains, Noi Bai Airport, Ha Noi, Viet Nam, January 1999



Buddhist Temple, near Da Nang Viet Nam, March 1989

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